

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the abstract as follows:

--A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed or not, includes the steps of applying an external force to a sheet material by bringing an external force ~~application means~~ into contact with the sheet material, detecting the external force applied to the sheet material ~~by detection means~~, and determining whether the sheet materials are double fed or not using a signal obtained from the detection step means.--